



Serving Baltimore's Homelessness Population

Our Daily Bread is a Catholic Charities agency that serves hot meals to city residents in need of food assistance. The Fellows visited Our Daily Bread at lunchtime where they met the Director of Our Daily Bread, Dennis Murphy, who invited them to sit with the clients, listen to some of their stories, and share a hot meal prepared in their volunteer-run dining room.

Perhaps the most striking comment made by Dennis during his talk was that for the guests they serve. This is one place where the disenfranchised poor are empowered to make a choice, regarding what they would like to eat and drink—being offered a vegetarian option and water or sweet tea. Though these choices may seem small, to a population that lives with very little choice in their lives it is one reason the meal program is so successful. Catholic Charities seeks to provide an empowering environment where their guests are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Thomasina Hiers, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Human Services discussed the importance of successful institutional relationships for local government and nonprofit agencies in addressing hunger and poverty and providing for the needs of the Baltimore's most vulnerable residents.



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Q & A with Mayoral Fellow Alumnus Chandra Jackson



Name: Chandra L. Jackson

Hometown:

Atlanta, Georgia

Degrees:

B.S. in Biology, Bethune-

Cookman University;

Master of Science in Cardio-vascular Epidemiology, Harvard University

Fellowship Class: 2009

Fellowship Placement:

Health Department

Where is she now? PhD

Candidate in Epidemiology

at the Johns Hopkins Uni-

versity Bloomberg School of

Public Health

Why were you interested in serving as a Mayoral Fellow?

I am a C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown Scholar in Community Health at Johns Hopkins with a strong focus on addressing socioeconomic and racial/ethnic health disparities associated with obesity and type 2 diabetes, and was interested in developing a more practical, deeper understanding of how my epidemiologic skills could be used by local government to help eliminate health disparities while improving overall health in an urban environment with so many health needs and limited resources.

What did you accomplish over your 10-week assignment?

I worked on the city's \$1.8 million Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes Disparities Initiative as an epidemiologist. I primarily managed and analyzed hospital utilization data (e.g. cause-specific emergency room visits) from Maryland's Healthcare Services Cost Review Commission to inform the decisions made by the Initiative's Community Health Workers, which was one component of the city's evidence-based approach to address the aforementioned health disparities that have a large, measurable economic impact on the city. I also helped develop an evaluation plan and create the marketing materials to ensure that the interventions were culturally-sensitive upon implementation.

What was the best thing about the Fellowship?

Other than having the opportunity to present our projects and recommendations directly to the Mayor and her administration, it was great to have unprecedented access - at this stage in our careers - to high-level city officials with a sincere interest in each fellow's professional development and career trajectory. I was, ultimately, very pleased that the fellowship provided immense opportunities to network and establish connections with officials across many city agencies, other influential community leaders, as-well as current and former Fellows who I would have otherwise been unlikely to meet.

Do you have any advice for current Fellows?

First, create a formal checklist of your expectations for the fellowship, and make it your mission to ensure they have all been met before the fellowship experience ends. Second, focus on sustaining a good balance between working diligently to complete your project and creating opportunities to meet with as many members of the Mayor's administration as possible. These were opportunities that I created as a Fellow. Lastly, stay in contact with the other Fellows. You are all clearly Baltimore's next generation of leaders!



Visit to Citiwatch

Baltimore's CitiWatch program is among the most advanced video surveillance and crime-fighting initiatives in the country, allowing a handful band of police officers monitoring upwards of 550 cameras simultaneously to respond to crimes in real time. From flashing "blue light" cameras to more subtly placed 360-degree rotational cameras, as the central hub for all police cameras in the city CitiWatch has become one of the principal crime-fighting tools employed by the Baltimore City Police.

Baltimore City Police Sergeant Gregg Grueninger led the Fellowship presentation at CitiWatch headquarters on the Westside. Each computer bank included two widescreen monitors, a specialized keyboard with camera controls, and a joystick to toggle control of the cameras in real time. On the screens were live feeds from a range of cameras around the City.

After the Fellows filed in, Sgt. Grueninger discussed the operating procedures for CitiWatch – how cameras are monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week – regardless of any other factors. "Those blizzards earlier last winter," Sgt. Grueninger said, "didn't keep anyone away – I was here each day; we were using the cameras to figure out which streets had and hadn't been plowed."

Camera operators in CitiWatch's headquarters have a direct link to the Baltimore City Police. From their basement nerve center, camera operators are able to call in a crime as it happens, with the information relayed to nearby squad cars. To demonstrate both how camera footage has captured criminal activity, and how it has been used to help police intercept criminals, the Fellows were shown a ten-minute collection of CitiWatch camera clips. Initially, the clips showed accidents occurring – people running into on-coming traffic, for instance – but the clips grew progressively more serious, with stabbings, shootings, and a thwarted rape all captured on film.

"At first I had definite 'Big Brother/Minority Report' reaction to seeing all the cameras watching us throughout the City," said Fellow Liz Marchetta. But upon seeing the clips, the real impact of CitiWatch became very evident – "the idea that a rape could be prevented through this system is a testament to its amazing potential," she said.

With over 2,300 total video retrieval requests last year for critical footage, the role of CitiWatch in the City's fight against crime is well-established, and seems as though it will only grow further in the future.

Mayor's Office Spotlight



Budget Management

Within the Department of Finance, the Bureau of the Budget and Management Research (BBMR) is principally tasked with crafting and managing Baltimore City's budget. BBMR analysts work with individual agencies in order to verify revenues and expenditures both for the current fiscal year, as well as anticipated needs for appropriations in the next fiscal year. The budget making cycle is a never-ending process. Running from July to July, BBMR is constantly engaged in either closing out the previous year's budget, analyzing agency requests for further appropriations, alteration of fund classification in the current fiscal year, or readying the next fiscal year's budget.

Beyond just "managing the budget," BBMR is also responsible for spearheading the City's commitment to outcome-based budget. Outcome-based budgeting was adopted by the City several years ago and has been implemented in hopes of linking funding availability to measurable outcomes, rather than simply increasing line-items on the budget. This budgeting process increases the incentives presented to individual agencies to achieve greater value for money in daily operations while also focusing on just what it is that the City's "customers" – its citizens – truly value.

BBMR also conducts an array of financial modeling and analysis projects at the behest of the Mayor and/or the City Council. From projecting the impacts of changes to the City's Property Tax rate to identifying potential programs and initiatives that could generate City-wide cost savings, BBMR is actively engaged in analyzing ways for the City to augment its overall cost-effectiveness.



Mayoral Fellow Service Event at BARCS

The Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) serves the Baltimore City community providing animal rescue and care shelter services for over 11,000 animals a year. On an average day, BARCS has over 400 animals housed in its facilities that are cared for by a modest size-staff and hundreds of committed volunteers. The mayoral Fellows took a trip to the BARCS center as a community service event on July 15th. They were welcomed by Esta Baker, BARCS Volunteer Coordinator. The Fellows spent the day clearing up a wall of overgrowth and vines that would serve as a safe, open-space for dog-walking. They also tended to the small shrubs that were planted recently by the U2 community service group.

After the Fellows completed the service portion, Ms. Baker gave a tour of the BARCS facility, discussing the challenges BARCS faces with limited resources and an overwhelming demand for services. As the Fellows toured the many dog kennels and cat rooms, she explained that BARCS services go beyond shelter-care. It involves educational outreach and campaigning to fundraise and change popular perceptions of shelter animals, and encourage spaying and neutering to prevent the need for their services in the first place. The BARCS trip was an enriching experience because it showed the Fellows that the work of keeping communities safe and protecting our stray animal population requires the collaboration of municipal agencies, city residents and trained professionals.



Cleared area that will be used for dogwalks.



Fellows clearing front entrance area.



Fellows clearing fence area.



Featured Fellows

Adrianna Overdorff



Baltimore is known for, among other things, the lovely architecture of its rowhouses – from stoop to shutter. University of Maryland Master of Social Work student Adrianna Overdorff has found herself immersed in Baltimore architecture this summer as she helps the Department of General Services ready a database on information about a set of 20 City-owned historic properties. The database, a never-before-assembled collection of information on City-owned historic properties, will be used as the basis of third-party market analysis and sales feasibility forecasting for the buildings, as well as a model for future information-gathering and reporting on city properties.

In pursuit of that architectural and historical information, Adrianna has been able to gain access to an array of places generally off-limits to even the most seasoned Baltimoreans. “I’ve been on the roof of the War Memorial Building” Adrianna said. As far as the buildings go, “the information we gather this summer will serve in the development of innovative re-uses to bring them back to life.”

A graduate of the University of Hawaii and originally from Tucson, Adrianna has gained a variety of experiences in the non-profit field before joining the Fellowship program. “I have worked with diverse low income populations including adult ex-offenders and homeless, chronically mentally ill adults,” she said, adding that her interest in municipal government stems from her prior social work experiences. Ultimately she is looking forward to learning the inner workings of City government over the course of the summer “and integrating this experience into my future career as a social worker.”

Teddy Minch



Teddy Minch is a Baltimore native. He returned to Baltimore after graduating from Tufts University, where he studied political science and developed an interest in government and politics, especially in public policy. Teddy is currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy at the University of Southern California with a focus in Infrastructure Finance. Teddy stays connected to Baltimore through local community service and is a long-time volunteer swim coach for the Baltimore County Special Olympics team. Teddy says that the experience is both rewarding and personal as his younger brother is a member of the swim team.

As a Mayoral Fellow, Teddy is working with the Department of Finance, specifically the Bureau of the Budget and Management Research. There, he is conducting analysis of Baltimore City’s first ever online citizen-survey. The survey, designed to gauge resident sentiment on an array of issues, is administered from March through and receives around 800 responses.

Teddy’s academic and professional interest in municipal finance and budget-making makes for a perfect fit with his Fellowship project. Teddy says that the opportunity to understand the issue from a resident standpoint is crucial to developing the skills and insight to engage in effective policy-making outside the classroom. At the end of the day, Teddy argues, “Government is not immune to the same constraints faced by individuals - that scarce resources exist for service provision and are becoming scarcer still annually.” Teddy brings passion and deep understanding to his project and says that his hope this summer is, “to be able to identify ways the City can streamline government and deliver its services more cost-effectively, ultimately creating much greater value for City residents.”



The Fellows' visit to the new homeless shelter on Fallsway Road was led by Director of Homeless Services, Kate Briddell. Briddell outlined Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's work with different community groups and City leaders to design and build a homeless shelter. The new shelter was strategically built nearby Health Care for the Homeless and Our Daily Bread to improve access to social services. The new shelter will offer case management, transgender-sensitive services, and convalescent care. The convalescent care unit will offer the after-care treatment and space for rest that uninsured or underinsured adults are rarely afforded.

The Fellows then visited the Health Care for the Homeless (HCH), one of 18 national programs pioneered in the eighties to provide health care to the homeless using the housing-first model. This model seeks to address homelessness by stabilizing housing first, to enable individuals to access the life-saving social services that can help protect them from the burdens of negotiating life in poverty without housing. HCH President and CEO Jeffrey Singer, a social worker by training, gave a tour through HCH's LEED-certified facilities which hosts the first stand-alone dental clinic for uninsured children and adults. HCH will soon begin providing adult prisoner re-entry services to a limited number of ex-offenders to help reduce the costs of incarceration and recidivism rates. An open panel discussion concluded the afternoon with Sabree Akinyele, the Director of Employment Services at HCH, Jeffrey Singer, and two HCH clients who courageously shared their stories of falling through the cracks, describing their personal struggles with homelessness, joblessness, and inadequate access to health care.

Our Daily Bread, the Baltimore City Homeless Shelter, and Health Care for the Homeless make up a crucial safety net for Baltimore's vulnerable families, children, and adults. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's leadership and support for inter-agency collaboration strengthens social services and the safety net for the homeless. For the Fellows, many of whom have strong backgrounds in liberal arts and public policy, these social service institutions challenged them to think about the many layers of work that goes into addressing poverty through government and nonprofit partnerships.



Kate Briddell giving a tour of the homeless shelter.



Open panel discussion with Sabree Akinyele.



Dennis Murphy explaining Our Daily Bread.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 27th

Speaker Series: Beyond the Car

July 29th

Police ride-a-longs

August 3rd

Speaker Series: Building a Baltimore Brand





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